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□ WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), today voted to make key investments, \$13.8 billion over five years, to improve water quality for communities around the country by voting for H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act. The Legislation also has the potential to create approximately 480,000 jobs over the next five years. The measure passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 317 to 101.

“Fixing our nation’s broken water infrastructure is key to maintaining the health of our citizens, sustaining our environment and improving and diversifying our economy,” DeFazio said. “I’ve heard from mayors in my state who can’t upgrade their water systems without increasing water bills by 50-100 percent. With the struggling economy, the last thing consumers need is a jump in their water and sewer bills”

“This bill puts people back to work and is a smart solution to our wastewater problems,” DeFazio continued. “The federal government used to partner with communities to build wastewater infrastructure projects that allowed local communities to meet federal clean water mandates. Unfortunately, we have moved away from that partnership in recent years. This bill helps get us closer to being a real partner again in making needed investments in wastewater projects. Investing in our water infrastructure creates good paying jobs and provides our children with infrastructure that will last for decades.”

After years of underfunding by a GOP-controlled Congress, the bill authorizes a robust level of funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides low-interest loans and additional subsidies to local communities for construction of wastewater treatment facilities and other water pollution abatement projects. Since it was created in 1987, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund has been the primary source of federal funding for wastewater infrastructure projects. This legislation begins to close an approximately \$3.2 billion to \$11.1 billion annual funding gap that exists between wastewater infrastructure needs and current funding levels. If this gap is not closed, it is projected that in the next few years water quality will decline back to the distressing levels of the early 1970s. Furthermore, the bill will create infrastructure projects that will put people back to work in this struggling economy. Under the measure, Oregon will receive \$155.5 million over five years to improve wastewater treatment facilities.

The Senate must now take up the legislation.